



The League Link

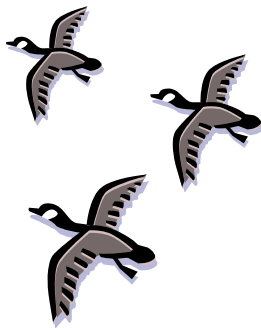
Newsletter of Idaho Writers' League Sandpoint Chapter

Editor, Bette Poss

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The chief cause of failure and unhappiness in life is trading what you want most for what you want right now.

Be like a postage stamp. Stick to one thing until you get there.



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SANDPOINT CHAPTER NEWS

Our chapter's booth with its slogan "Turn right at the Read Barn" was a blue ribbon winner at the Bonner County Fair. Sandy and Cassandra did the artwork and setup, including Moorilda, the barrel cow. The Free Write Contest was a success, thanks to Harvey and Charlie.

We want to welcome two new members to our chapter, Linda Rubin and Dave Henderson. We have heard great samples of Linda's poetry and Dave's short stories at our meetings.

Thanks to all who sent in their stamps and envelopes! Our mailing budget is in fine shape now.

Dues are still \$25.00 per year with \$10.00 going to our chapter and \$15.00 to the state.

A third monthly meeting of the Sandpoint Chapter has been added. It will be held the second Tuesday of the month from 9 am to 12 noon at the VFW Hall on Division Street. The meetings at the library on the first and third Saturdays of the month will continue. The time, however, has changed to 9 am to noon.

Election of officers will take place in November. If you are interested in running for office, please contact Mary Buchanan who is in charge of nominations.

COUNTY FAIR WRITING CONTEST WINNER

Mary Koski won the “free write” contest sponsored by the Sandpoint Chapter of the Idaho Writers League at their County Fair Booth. The prize was a brief case provided by Express International Magazine. Each contestant was given a title and theme selected at random and then allowed three minutes to turn it into a story with a message. Representatives of the Writers League met at the library September 6th to judge the 17 entries.

Mary was born in Sandpoint. Her dad was a logger. Due to economic problems in the logging industry her family moved to Seattle. Mary returned to Sandpoint after high school and has lived here since. She retired from the career of cosmetologist and now follows a vocation as a public speaker and licensed minister promoting the Christian Faith. Mary has always had an interest in writing. She won some awards in high school and has enjoyed expressing her feelings with poetry and prose. A book about Mary’s life with the “Walk of Faith Ministries” called *These Stories* written by Dwayne Parson will be available by the end of October 2003.

— Harvey Pine

See her winning entry below.

SHOW BUSINESS

When I was five years old, I thought show business was right up my alley. I put on quite a show in grade school — New tap shoes, big blue puffy skirt and what I loved most — Lots of Blue makeup on my eyes.

I danced around a Christmas tree to the tune of Jingle Bells. The end song was “I saw Mommy kissing Santa Clause.” What a wonder I was, but never quite made Broadway.

— Mary Koski

MEMBER YAHOOOS

Irene Dunn was interviewed by a reporter from Bozeman about her experience in the 1959 earthquake for a story commemorating the 44th anniversary of the event. Irene’s story about her more recent feelings concerning her experience will be published next August.

Mona’s story about blacksmithing appeared in *Nostalgia Magazine*. She also was asked to be interviewed by *The Budding Writer*. They accepted her article “Electronic Publishing.”

In response to her donation of files to the Montana Historical Society, Montana Senator Elliott wrote "Dear Mona, That's a wonderful gift you made to the Historical Society, but the greater gift was your taking the time to make sure the old times were not forgotten. Very best wishes. Jim" (Way to go, Mona!)

IDAHO WRITERS' LEAGUE CONTEST WINNERS

Results of the 2003 Writing Contest of the Idaho Writers' League have been announced. Four members of the Sandpoint Chapter were winners.

Joanna Fuchs won first place in the Juvenile Category.

Katherine Hamshar won 3rd in Light Verse, Open Title. She also won 1st Honorable Mention in the Serious Verse Category/Open Title and Serious Verse Category/Assigned Title/Theme.

Betty Anderson won 3rd in Adult Fiction/Open Title.

Helen Campbell won 1st Honorable Mention in the Adult Title Category.

CONGRATULATIONS to these Winners!

I had incomplete information in the first copies of this newsletter. I apologize! — the editor

MIGHTIER THAN THE SWORD

Once upon a time there was unrest in a far off land. A top advisor feared the threat to the tranquil country. He requested an audience with the King.

“Your Majesty, there is trouble in the South side of your Kingdom. The peasants are taking up arms. Subjects are training with weapons. They are complaining about living conditions and do not appreciate your efforts. We have evidence there are plans to disrupt the Royal Services and cause trouble. We need to develop contingency plans to protect the palace.

The King thought for a moment. “Thank you for your concern but I am not worried. My guards can handle these hoodlums. Fortunately the misfits do NOT know how to use a PEN”.

— Harvey Pine

The First Fifty Pages

By Dianna Winget

(I recently had opportunity to attend the Willamette Writer's Conference in Portland. I'd like to share some of the notes I took from my favorite workshop presented by author Jessica Morrell on the importance of the first fifty pages of a novel.)

A story's opening is like forces gathering. It must have immediacy, introduce the protagonist and elicit sympathy for him/her, and raise a reader's curiosity. Openings should also give an idea of the overall pacing of your story.

Be careful not to begin a story too soon. Every story should begin with an inciting incident. This incident might be described as the "day that is different." It must be something powerful enough to interrupt the normal flow of your character's life, something that tips your character off balance. It's this inciting incident that forces your character to come up with a goal or a plan to cope; this is the true beginning of the story. This incident doesn't necessarily have to be dramatic, but it does have to be significant.

Try to use as little narrative as possible in the first fifty pages. Instead, use dialogue to portray how your character is feeling. Go from scene to scene, pulling the reader along with unresolved questions and actions. Don't be afraid to thwart your character's desires; tell them no as often as you can. This will help to showcase your character's main traits, which should begin to show up immediately after the story opens. Less significant traits can be introduced later, as can background and what led up to it.

Think of dialogue as a power exchange rather than a simple discussion. Make sure each character's dialogue is consistent with his/her traits and personality. Dialogue that doesn't move the plot along doesn't belong in the story. Also, be careful of too many gestures and facial expressions. If not used sparingly they detract instead of enhance.

Finally, do a side-by-side comparison of your story and published works by authors writing in your genre. Notice what elements they included in the first fifty pages. Notice the verbs they chose, metaphors, dialogue, transitions, the ratio of narrative to dialogue, etc. This will give you a real feel for your story's strengths and weaknesses.



Jobs were scarce and Frank had to take one in Alaska. One day as he was reading a letter from home, his face went white. "What's the matter?" his fellow worker asked.

"My wife just informed me that we have a freak in the family. She says that I won't recognize little Joey when I get home. He grew another foot since I left."

